

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 06764 291138Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, PEPR, IN, US
SUBJECT: DESAI'S CONDITIONS FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF SAFEGUARDS

REF: A) NEW DELHI 6415, B) NEW DELHI 6420, C) NEW DELHI 6511

1. IN A FAREWELL CALL LAST EVENING, PRIOR TO LEAVING FOR LONDON TODAY, THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER UNDERTOOK TO PROBE FOR THE IMPLICATIONS OF PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT THIS WEEK THAT THERE IS "ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION OF ALLOWING INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION OF INDIAN NUCLEAR PLANTS AS LONG AS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES DO NOT EXIST FOR SIMILAR INSPECTION OF THE NUCLEAR PLANTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES" (AS REPORTED IN REFTELS DESAI FIRS ASSERTED THAT THE PRECONDITIONS WHICH HE HAD STATED TO PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN HERE IN DELHI IN JANUARY REMAINED UNCHANGED AND THAT THERE COULD NEVER BE QUESTION OF INCONSISTENCY OR VACILLATION ON HIS PART. BUT THEN HE ADDED THAT HIS CONDITIONS HAD ALWAYS ENTAILED INSPECTION OF ALL NUCLEAR PLANTS, INCLUDING MILITARY PLANTS.

2. WE SEE THIS TO BE A DISTINCT HARDENING IN THE PM'S POSITION SINCE THIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME
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MINISTER CALLAGHAN. UNQUESTIONABLY THE HARDNING HAS BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE INTENSIFICATION OF POLITICAL AND PRESS PRESSURES WITH WHICH THE PM HAS HAD TO CONTEND SINCE THE NRC RENDERED ITS SPLIT VOTE. WE HAD INTERPRETED HIS RECENT STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT TO IMPLY, BUT PERHAPS DELIBERATELY NOT SPECIFY, THE INCLUSION OF MILITARY FACILITIES. HOWEVER, OUR WORST FEARS AS REPORTED IN NEW DELHI

6415, SEEM NOW TO HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED.

3. UNLIKE THE CORDIAL AND RELAXED MOOD IN WHICH I HAD FOUND HIM YESTERDAY MORNING, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOUND THE PRIME MINISTER TIRED AND TESTY. IT COULD BE THAT THE QUESTION WAS PUT TO MORARJI AT THE WRONG TIME OF DAY. AND SINCE THE CONVERSATION WAS A PRIVATE ONE, THERE IS AT LEAST A SLIGHT CHANCE THE SITUATION MAY STILL BE RETRIEVABLE. THEREFORE, I PROPOSE TO LET A LITTLE TIME PASS AND AT AN APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY RAISE THE QUESTION MYSELF WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.
GOHEEN

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